

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (canceled)
2. (canceled)
3. (canceled)
4. (canceled)
5. (canceled)
6. (canceled)

7. (currently amended) A method for thinning a layer on a substrate without damaging a delicate layer underlying the layer to be thinned, the method comprising the steps of:

bringing the substrate completely into a bath of an electrolyte solution, and

- 5 forcing an electropolishing pad that is mounted completely within the bath of the electrolyte solution against the layer on the substrate while applying a desired voltage potential through the electrolyte solution between the substrate and the electropolishing pad, with both the substrate and the electropolishing pad entirely ~~surrounded by~~ contained within the bath of
- 10 the electrolyte solution, where the layer is thinned both physically by the electropolishing pad and electrolytically by the voltage potential applied through the electrolyte solution.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein the electrolyte solution is an abrasive electrolyte solution.
9. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein the substrate is a semiconducting substrate including integrated circuits.
10. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein the layer comprises a first electrically conductive layer, an underlying non electrically conductive barrier layer, and an intervening electrically conductive seed layer.
11. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein the layer comprises copper.
12. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein the desired voltage potential has a range of between about one tenth of one volt and about one hundred volts.

13. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein the electropolishing pad has a diameter that is smaller than a diameter of the substrate.
14. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein at least one of the electropolishing pad and the substrate are moved relative to the other.
15. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein both the electropolishing pad and the substrate are moved relative to the other.
16. (canceled)
17. (canceled)
18. (canceled)
19. (canceled)
20. (canceled)